

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA

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The United States Congress currently is considering legislation—H.R. 4437 (Sensenbrenner)—which would have major ramifications on our federal immigration policy and how it is implemented across our nation. Some portions of the bill appear practical and reasonable. For instance, H.R. 4437 mandates that all cargo bound for the United States be screened for nuclear and radiological materials. The bill also would make it easier to deport illegal immigrants who are identified as terrorists and would explicitly bar them from becoming citizens. In addition, H.R. 4437 would mandate that employees use a system called “Basic Pilot” which enables them to screen prospective employees’ Social Security and foreign identification numbers with the federal Department of Health Services to ensure that they are legally eligible to work in the United States.

However, H.R. 4437 also contains very troubling elements. Specifically, the bill would encourage local police—such as deputies within the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department—to enforce immigration law, and it would withhold federal funds from state

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and local governments that maintain policies preventing local police and sheriff's deputies from reporting illegal immigrants to federal authorities. Also, H.R. 4437 would require that individuals living in the United States illegally be charged with a criminal—not civil—penalty punishable by 366 days in prison.

While it is entirely understandable that United States residents have reason to be concerned about illegal immigration, H.R. 4437 is not good policy. It effectively would require that our Sheriff's Deputies do the work of federal immigration enforcement officers—which may discourage many local residents from calling authorities to report a crime. Moreover, the criminalization of immigrants who have arrived in the United States without proper documentation is disturbing. From this nation's inception, immigrants have come to the United States to flee oppression and escape desperate circumstances. We should not make criminals out of families who are seeking a better life and, in many cases, trying desperately to survive.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE, that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors officially oppose H.R. 4437.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors send a five-signature letter to both the United States Congress and President George W. Bush expressing our formal opposition to H.R. 4437.

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